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000 when they have been blessed with a son.

842 3.18. We have pointed out above (3.16) that Badagas have some idea of a "safe period" at the end of the menstrual cycle, and they also believe the middle of the cycle is when conception occurs. Beyond 842 this, however, there was no idea of contraception until public health officials recently began the family planning campaign. This advice, 168 given out by government officials, for years fell on deaf ears because it was addressed to the men of the community. When I asked 420 Badaga adults of both sexes, in 1963, whether some form of birth control should be encouraged to improve village life, not a single person said Yes. In the late 1960s however the programme began to be more effective because illiterate old Badaga women pointed out to younger women the benefits of having fewer children. Intra-uterine devices seem to be the method most women favour; but some men have submitted to vasectomies, and women have sometimes been sterilized after a difficult delivery in hospital. I am unaware of any distribution of government-supplied contraceptives to Badaga men except during a very brief campaign nearly 20 years ago. Men are however encouraged to have vasectomies with the offer of free transportation to the hospital, 60 rupees, and a transistor radio. K. Sithamma said she disapproved of this programme because if a man's children should die once he has been sterilized he cannot 842 have any more. In her view the only proper way to restrict births is to stop having coitus until another child is wanted; abstinence was seemingly often counselled to the poor. Whether a woman gets pregnant or remains barren is the will of God, and because a pregnancy [171] is his gift abortion would be a sin. "You should build the house; God should give you children." Nonetheless one does hear of unmarried girls aborting by eating a lot of greasy chicken until they [847] vomit, the stomach spasms sometimes having the desired effect. [171] (Among the neighbouring Irula tribe a two-inch twig of swallow wort is reportedly placed in the vagina to bring about an abortion; Nambiar and Bharati 1965: 70).

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thing. The leathery skins of mangosteen fruit are also reported to cure dysentery when soaked in hot water which is drunk by the patient (Krishnamurthi 1953 : 145).

[164] WORMS

6.59. In adults the same symptoms may indicate difficulties with worms or with a displaced colon. In order to distinguish between the two problems, a therapist rubs some oil onto the belly, and as he does so there is a sound of liquid moving inside. If that noise continues after the rubbing, it means that worms are growing inside the belly. A treatment for a displaced colon is to tie a very cold, wet cloth on the belly in the morning. If the diarrhoea problem subsides for some time, this means it is not worms that are responsible.

Adults also suffer from worms because of eating too much sweet food. The same medicine is made for them as for children (5.36), but they are given two or three teaspoonfuls of it every morning and evening, not thrice daily, until they recover.

[164] ULCER (*hotte huṇṇu*)

6.60. It is said that ulcers can be cured by swallowing the ground leaves of the dead nettle mixed with lime juice (Krishnamurthi 1953 : 145).

Genitals

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6.61. Neither the Badagas nor any of the neighbouring tribes practise circumcision or clitoridectomy. Some men have recently had vasectomies at the Government Hospital, in connection with the family planning programme.

164 VENEREAL DISEASE

Other South Indians sometimes claim there are eighteen different kinds of genital disease, but the Badagas know of only two kinds: *sule*, which originates in women, and *belle*, which originates in men. Women cannot be troubled by *sule*, but men suffer when they catch it from women; similarly, men are not afflicted by *belle*, but women can catch it from men. I was told that a century ago nearly all of the Badaga, Toda, Kota, Kurumba